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## COMMENTS.

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**MR. EDITOR :** There is a wide-spread and deep and dangerous discontent, not abroad, but at home, against what is regarded as corporation despotism. It lighted the incendiary fires of Pittsburgh, and it breathes threatenings and slaughters by the lips of applauded anarchists. The discontent is increasing. What shall be done ? Neither sneering denials of the justice of this discontent, nor threatening denunciations of it, will avail us. Mr. Field suggests the association of capital and labor. But the best and most equitable co-partnership of labor and capital is the state itself, and the resumption and assumption by the state of certain great powers now exerted and perverted by corporations, would be colossal strides in the right path of progress. The state, for example, should own and operate all the railroads within its limits, and all the telegraphs, and it should monopolize the insurance business. This is not a "communistic" proposition. The governments of continental Europe own and operate the railroads and telegraphs, and the result is pre-eminently satisfactory. The work is done speedily, cheaply, and well ; and the state absorbs all the profits now grasped in our country by railroad kings and electric eels. Surely, for life and fire insurance, no security would be so ample as the entire wealth of the state. The cant that was first coined in the crafty brain of the Shylocks, that "the state should never interfere with private interests," whatever element of truth it may have in Europe (where the state is not the people, but the privileged order) or in the primitive era of our own history, is both inapplicable and illogical now, especially when by "private interests" is meant the chartered privileges that involve the power of eminent domain with the added usurpation of taxation without representation. Charles I. lost his head, and George III. a continent, for attempting to levy taxes without a direct vote of the people ; and yet the sum that they asked for would be a mere beggar's copper-coin-pittance compared with Gould's and the Vanderbilts' levies, wrested from the people under the names of "watered stock" and "rates as high as the freight will bear." Yet their partisans talk of the dishonesty of politicians ! When did Tweed ever dare to sweep millions into his coffers by a single vote, as the railroad kings have done again and again ? Our saxon blood is shown more by the way in which we submit to a king on wheels and rebelled against a king on a throne, than by any other of our national traits. No loyal Englishman every seriously complains of being robbed ; he only insists on his British birthright of being robbed according to law. As

long as corporations shout "Thus saith the bond," we do not seem to see that we, as a state, have delegated a power that the legislature as a body cannot itself wield, namely, the power of taxation without the consent of the people.

T. R. STEPHENS.

MR. EDITOR: In the discussion of the question raised by Dr. Shedd, both he and his friends seem to have wholly overlooked the personal character, asking, not what an individual is, but what he may have done. Nothing in the universe stands still, and the human being obeys the general impulse. The moral character is undergoing constant change, progressing or retrograding, climbing higher or sinking lower. And the moral quality of the same act varies with the circumstances and motives of the actor. He that pilfers for the love of it is on a low plane morally, while a saint might take a loaf of bread to save life. The man that takes the life of another under a deep sense of injury, though bad enough, is not so degraded as he that murders for the gust of it. Human laws, indeed, call all murder by the same name, and prescribe the penalty. But this is from our inability to look into the motive. Doubtless, if man possessed the eye of infinite intelligence, penalties would be graduated somewhat according to moral culpability. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the All Father, who

"knows each chord, its various tone,  
Each will, its various bias,"

will not trouble Himself to look into the "book of accounts," but rather will inquire into the qualities of the being that has come up to judgment? What is this thing here? Is it gold, or dross, or an amalgamation with the baser metals? This is what is constantly being done on the earth through the operation of nature's law, which is God's law; and to assert a less beneficent rule for some time in the future, however many ages hence, is to impeach Infinity. Every day, every moment of our lives, we come to judgment, and are sent to the left or are awarded the right, according not to the outward acts but the inward actions of the soul. This, being justice now, will be justice forever. The world does not so much refute as outgrow its superstitions, and it often clings to the name of an error long after it has abandoned it in fact. Less than a quarter of a century ago half the Christian world would have approved the atrocious doctrine set forth by Dr. Shedd. To-day it is a religious anachronism, and makes one feel as if contemplating an archæological object disinterested from the site of Tyre or Sidon. Nevertheless, Dr. Shedd has done positive good. His incisive statement of an antiquated creed stands in such sharp antithesis to the more enlightened modern teaching, that it serves as a sort of theological waymark, showing that the world has moved on apace.

ISAAC KINLEY.

MR. EDITOR: If the human race has been benefited by Christianity, and if woman is a part of the human race, then the only logical conclusion is, that woman has been benefited by Christianity. Any one that accepts the premises

of this proposition must accept its conclusion; and in order to prove the opposite, one would have to show, either that woman is not a part of the unit humanity, or that humanity has not been benefited by the Christian Religion. That the canons of the church have been unjust to woman is true, but that these caused her degradation is a mistake; for the degradation of woman (and of man also, since the two "must rise or fall together") existed before the coming of Christ. And the church, instead of causing the middle ages and woman's humiliation, was really the only beam of light in the midst of the darkness. Indeed, one might as well try to prove that civilization has not benefited woman. But the statement of Bishop Spalding concerning the headship of the man over the woman in the family, is hardly relevant or consistent with the rest of his argument. To say that "either the husband or the wife must be the depository of domestic authority," is a mere assumption; and to add that the man shall be the authority because "the defense of property and rights is naturally intrusted to those whose hands hold the sword," is to advocate the continuance of that principle which elsewhere he relegates to barbarism. "When strength is made the measure of right, woman is inevitably driven to the wall," he says, and gives us to understand that this is to be deplored. Yet physical force, the criterion of barbarism, he makes the criterion of the family. As a matter of fact, the families that are nearest the ideal are those where neither the man nor the woman rules, but where both rule and are ruled. To assume that man is to rule over woman, is to encourage in him that spirit of tyranny which needs no encouragement, and to arouse in her a desire to retaliate which quite often results in an inversion of "headship."

H. R. SHATTUCK.

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MR. EDITOR: During three years of my course at Harvard, I enjoyed a large measure of the academic freedom that Prof. West deprecates, and I would like to supplement his article with a little of my experience. The faculty tries to dissuade the student from choosing absurdly unrelated studies by means of a paragraph in the catalogue, in which he is "strongly recommended to make his choice with great care, under the best advice, and in such a manner that his elective courses, from first to last, may form a rationally connected whole." I have not known of any other means being used to secure this end, and some choices are made which appear to be dictated only by indolence or caprice. Students are often refused admission to a course because a more elementary or a more advanced one in the same branch is better suited to them; but I never heard of a refusal on the ground that the course was not rationally connected with the student's plan of study. A large part of the undergraduates are earnestly desirous of making such a selection as the catalogue advises; and there have been repeated calls in the students' papers for systematic advice from the faculty, which have elicited a partial response in the form of circulars describing the courses in several departments. Still, I think that nearly all who have been through Harvard under the present policy would agree in rating Prof. West's remedy—a return to a two-thirds prescribed course—as worse than the disease. A remedy that would not involve the loss of any of the benefits of the elective system, would be to enforce the excellent recommendation

that I have quoted from the catalogue. Prof. West recognizes that every young man must begin sometime to make decisions for himself, and he recommends as a preparation for this independence a course of study like that of the German gymnasia. He scouts the idea that giving an immature youth freedom will "bring out his sense of responsibility, and compel him to rise to self-possession, discriminating judgment, and intellectual ripeness." But it often occurs that a youth, no older or more carefully trained than the average freshman, is called upon to assume large business responsibilities, and if he is made of the right kind of stuff, the effect is to make a man of him, precisely what Prof. West says it could not be. I wonder how he would account for the surprising "self-possession, discriminating judgment, and intellectual ripeness" of the city street Arab. The Harvard movement does not "put a premium on the avoidance" of Greek and Latin; it merely withdraws artificial support from these languages, leaving them to stand before the public on their merits. The amount of mathematics and physical science that the Harvard faculty proposes to require as a substitute for Greek is not likely to attract a lazy boy. It is actually unfair in its severity.

FRED. A. FERNALD.

MR. EDITOR: Prof. Hunt, in the REVIEW for April, told us how to reform English spelling. What is his notion of reform? As a college professor, he assures us that "in the average class of an American college there is but a very small proportion of accurate spellers." Whose fault is it? He has a notion that "the reform of our spelling is a necessity," and quotes with approval Prof. Whiting's crude assertion that "of all spellings in the world the English is the most absurd." The fact is, our spelling is much better than our pronunciation. "In all languages," writes Prof. Hunt, "the relation of sounds to signs should be close and uniformly correspondent." That is true; but why does he immediately turn his whole attention to the reverse of the principle, and throughout his article go on the absurd assumption that the relation must be that of signs to sounds? Let us conform sounds to signs. We are all agreed that "light" does not spell *lite*. Why pronounce it so? The German school-boy knows better; his "licht" is *licht*. I have lost all patience with the spelling performers. They go backward. Our spelling is not perfect; our pronunciation is absurd. Their rules are utterly unphilological. They would have us spell the word as they pronounce it; but we might prefer a pronunciation of our own. For instance, we are instructed to "change *ed* final to *t* where it has the *t* sound." But when and where is "the *t* sound" proper to *ed* final? "Wished" is not *wisht*. And Prof. Hunt should know that "lashed" is not *lasht*, and that "fixed" is not *fixt*. As long as our college professors can make no distinction between sounds, the average class will probably mistake the signs. Is "wished" to be written *wisht*, and "bored" not *bort*? Would even Prof. Hunt pronounce the word "saved" as *saf*? "Learned" is not *learnt*, and "leaned" is not *lent*. We are told to "drop *i* in 'parliament'." Must we throw out the corresponding *i* in "Christianity"? "Drop silent *b* in 'bomb', 'debt', 'limb', etc." I don't see any silent *b* there. Even in these words there is no silent *b* where English is spoken. "Drop the

*h* of *ch* in 'choler', 'school', etc." And in "church" too? Our *ch* is but a mongrel form of *k*. We pronounce "school" correctly. We pronounce "church" incorrectly; it is *kurk*.  
I. J. STINE.

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MR. EDITOR: There is a portrait of Schopenhauer in a sitting-room in one of the hotels of Frankfort, presented by the sage to the proprietor, at whose *table d'hôte* he dined for many years. The face justifies Robert Buchanan's description in his article on "The New Buddha," in the May REVIEW. Schopenhauer's philosophy was largely influenced by his dinner. He led otherwise a life of seclusion, and his nearest daily contact with his fellow creatures was amid the changing herd of a *table d'hôte*, recruited in by the greed and haste of tourists. He thus came to think that the prominent attribute of men and women was animal appetite. His observations of love and marriage were equally superficial; he saw only the external phenomena; no wife or child exhibited to him the spiritual concoid of pure affection. But Robert Buchanan is unjust to both Buddha and Schopenhauer when he describes the latter as "The New Buddha." Schopenhauer was not a plagiarist, nor did Buddha believe in eternal death; on the contrary, Buddha taught that atomic life, upon the fall of its earthly tenement, merged into the Universal, Ever-existing Spirit, as "the dewdrop sinks into the sea." Schopenhauer anticipates some of the physical data of Darwin; as, for instance, that the sexes try to repair in their offspring the physical loss inherited from some ancestor, *e.g.* a short man desiring to mate with a tall woman. This is good detail, but Buddha's view was vastly more comprehensive of spiritual unities. He defined what Herbert Spencer gropes at in his "Eternal Force out of which all things proceed." Christianity is more understandable than either, conveying its definition of life and natural law through the allegory of human forms. It does not affect the spiritual character of genuine Buddhism to say that some sincere Buddhist really believes that its vast comprehensiveness is located in an idol; nor would it be just to say Christianity is untrue, because Dr. Shedd, with equal sincerity, minimizes its eternities in a graven image of his imagination.

WILLIAM McMICHAEL.

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MR. EDITOR: Your correspondents who comment on "The Law's Delay," "Why Crime is Increasing," etc., offer us remedies of no special value. The true remedies must start even with the original cause. That cause is the mental organization of the individual, affected favorably or unfavorably by education and surroundings. It must be regarded as immaterial who or what the individuals are, or why they are as they are; the question is, whether they are dangerous to the public order and the personal rights of others. If they are, they must be treated as other dangerous animal are; that is, be placed where they will be harmless. If they can be cured there, let them come back among the order-observing people; if not, keep them under restraint and make them as useful as possible. We quarantine when cholera prevails. We take victims of small-pox to a pest-house, and keep them until they are cured. We prohibit

marriage between near relatives and insane persons, for fear of diseased bodies and minds in the offspring. Much more should we do these things with persons of vicious and depraved natures, or those with diseased and criminal mental tendencies. The prison at Elmira is on the right road, but legislation is far short of the full requirements. So long as we regard a criminal as a thing to be "punished," so long crime will increase; and the more extreme the punishment the more the depravity. It is not a question of punishment at all. It is a question of public order with personal liberty. Those who desire personal liberty must observe and uphold public order and obey the law. Those who will not must be deprived of personal liberty and of the power to disturb that order. Under restraint and classification, education can be made to do its utmost to develop a healthy mentality. Mercy, philanthropy, and punishment can there have a fair field for exercise and experiment, and the results can be used. As now exercised in reforming the vicious, these means are largely lost. There are only two things that can be applied to unruly persons: restraint, and education that aims to teach them it is best and safest to be orderly. The restraint must come first, and be absolute, beyond escape; then classification, and the education while under restraint; and the restraint must continue until the education is successful, and for life if it fails. Abolish the idea of punishment, and let it be understood that the wrong-doer goes to his civil death, unless he can "be born again," and crime and criminals will rapidly decrease. Let restraint, useful labor, and education looking to development of healthy mentality, take the place of the vicious regulations now existing and called punishment, and a few generations will work wonders in the eradication of criminal tendencies.

C. H. REEVE.